

Everything You Need to Know About Constipation

The most common reason people become constipated is because they don't eat enough **fiber**. The bariatric diet is not a high fiber diet so constipation could result. Fiber is found in whole-grain products, fruits, and vegetables but if you've had bariatric surgery, you are limited in eating those foods. Protein doesn't provide fiber, unfortunately! Lack of physical activity or not drinking enough water can be culprits also.. Exercise keeps your internal processes on track, especially by helping to move food through your digestive system. Hormonal changes and medications may lead to constipation also. Frequent use of **laxatives** can backfire. Laxatives can cause constipation since the body may begin to rely heavily on the effects these medications and your body eventually won't be able to function without them. Ignoring the urge when you do have to go will contribute to developing constipation.

It is better to try to have a bowel movement after you've eaten a meal. So choose a meal and then condition yourself to have a bowel movement at that time regularly. Sitting on the toilet for 20 to 30 minutes following a meal, even if you don't have the urge, can encourage your bowels to move. Try putting your feet up on a stool rather than flat on the floor. This position can encourage having a bowel movement. Some people actually have bowel movements more than once a day, others a few times each week. Everyone one is different. Going less frequently doesn't always mean you are constipated. Drinking a hot beverage before you 'sit' for your daily routine helps. Stool softeners which you can buy over the counter can help if your stools are hard.

Preventing constipation can take time but once you apply these tips, you should find 'going' much easier! Below is a safe home remedy.

The Constipation Cure

1 cup unsweetened apple sauce

1 cup unprocessed bran

1/2 cup 100% prune juice

Mix ingredients. Refrigerate in a covered container. Take 1 tablespoon with a glass of water daily. Increase as need to 2 - 4 tablespoons as needed.

If these tips fail to resolve your constipation or you haven't had a bowel movement in over a week, consult with your doctor for further recommendations. For more help, please contact the bariatric nurse.

Over the Counter Products: Try half of the recommended dose if you just had bariatric surgery.

Colace: to soften stools

Benefiber: to add additional fiber

Milk of Magnesia: laxative

Miralax: Softener/laxative